(a) Government keeps the performance of its officers and staff under constant review. Reward in terms of recognition of merit in annual assessment, is provided for under rules.

(b) In terms of FR 56(j), the appropriate authority has absolute right to retire a Government servant in public interest after he has attained the age of 50/55 years. Penalties ranging from 'censure' to 'dismissal from service' can be imposed on a Government servant for good and sufficient reasons, according to the gravity of the charges proved against him, which can include the charges of administrative lapse, incompetence, financial misdemeanours etc. The UPSC is required to be consulted in cases where the President is the disciplinary authority, before imposing such penalty.

(c) Information relating to penalties imposed on Government servant by various disciplinary authorities is not centrally monitored/available.

Reduction in retirement age

149. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had sent a proposal to the Law Ministry for its opinion on the question of lowering the retirement age of Central Government employees to 58 years, which was increased to 60 in 1998;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Law Ministry has given its opinion on this proposal agreeing to restore the retirement age to 58 in line with the Expenditure Commission's recommendations that the Government cut its expenditure on salaries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the final decision taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI):

(a) No, Sir. No proposal to lower the retirement age of the Central Government employees is under consideration of the Government.

(b) to (e) Do not arise in view of reply to (a) above.

Pension reforms

150. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalized pension reform draft;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the pensioners have shown resentment to the new draft?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) and (b) All new recruits to the Central Government service joining from 1st January, 2004 (except the armed forces in the first stage) are mandatorily covered under the New Pension System (NPS). The monthly contribution is 10 percent of the salary and DA to be paid by the employee and matched by the Central Government. However, there is no contribution from the Government in respect of individuals who are not Government employees. The contributions and investment returns are deposited in a non-withdrawable pension tier-I account. The existing provisions of defined benefit pension and GPF are not available to the new recruits in the Central Government service.

Government proposes to set up a separate statutory regulator for this scheme.

(c) The NPS is applicable only to new entrants in Central Government service from January 1, 2004 and not to existing pensioners.

SSC Examination in all languages

151. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the PRIME MINSITER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to conduct the Staff Selection Commission examinations in all languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution;